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LETTER DATED 19 JULY 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 19 July 1998 from Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahhaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq. It concerns the fact that the United States of America, a permanent member of the Security Council, is continuing to interfere in Iraq's internal affairs in order to threaten the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity and place the security of its people at serious risk.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Letter dated 19 July 1998 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the President of the Security Council

There continue to be statements made by United States officials at all levels as well as press reports based on reliable information that clearly display the persistence and obduracy of the United States Administration in its constant interference in the internal affairs of the Republic of Iraq - a sovereign, independent country and a founding Member of the United Nations - in order to threaten its sovereignty and territorial integrity and place the security of its people at serious risk.

1. By my letter dated 22 May 1998 (S/1998/431, annex), we informed the President of the Security Council for the month of May of statements made by Richard Perle, a former United States Under Secretary of Defense, confirming the political objectives of the United States of America and its hostile intentions with regard to my country, Iraq.

2. By my letter dated 19 June 1998 (S/1998/546, annex), we informed the President of the Security Council for the month of June of the statements made by Martin Indyk, United States Assistant Secretary of State for Near East and North African Affairs, at a seminar for regional journalists held at the United States Department of State. On that occasion, he shamelessly announced that the United States Administration was planning to cooperate with bands of renegades, criminals, thieves and outlaws operating outside Iraq and to disburse United States funds to them in a new effort funded by Congress to build up what he claimed was political opposition to President Saddam Hussein.

3. I should now like to call your attention to new information that was published by the American newspaper the Wall Street Journal on 17 July 1998 in an article by its correspondent David Rodgers under the headline "Clinton Seeking Support for Plan Against Saddam" (see enclosure). The information given sheds light on new plans being studied at the highest levels of the United States Administration and the United States Congress in a frantic attempt to secure legislation giving the United States Administration broad authority to plan and mount clandestine and overt operations against Mr. Saddam Hussein, President of the Republic of Iraq, against Iraq and against the Iraqi people, all previous such hostile operations having met with abject failure.

The information published in the Wall Street Journal indicates that officials of the Department of State and the Department of Defense, alongside others from the Central Intelligence Agency, are discussing with the United States Congress the elaboration of what they call "a combined overt-covert strategy to weaken and potentially oust the Iraqi leader". Information is also provided to the effect that the United States Administration has "sent to Congress a classified notice or 'finding' seeking approval to tap secret contingency funds within the defense and intelligence budget". It is to be noted that the information provided by the Wall Street Journal indicates that prominent members of the United States Congress, including Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, held a private meeting with the United

States Secretary of Defense for this purpose and that Senate Republican majority leader Trent Lott met with retired general Wayne Downing, former chief of the United States Special Operations Command, to assess what are referred to as potential military options against Iraq and against President Saddam Hussein. General Downing confirmed that he had briefed Senate members on what he characterized as a range of options regarding Iraq, saying "I discussed with them things that could be done".

We have been anxious to keep the members of the Security Council informed of the hostile official actions taken time and again by the United States Administration against Iraq. We have, however, seen no reaction on the part of the Council to the grave matter of the hostile actions taken and official statements made by the United States Administration to threaten the sovereignty and independence of Iraq and the security of its people in violation of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law. Worst of all, the State that engages in all these hostile and unlawful acts is a permanent member of the Security Council and thus one that, in common with all the other permanent members, is supposed to be committed to respect for the Charter of the United Nations and international law and is not supposed to conduct itself, as is actually the case, as an outlaw State under international law.

The new information that we are bringing to the attention of the members of the Security Council is one more indication that the Government of the United States of America is persisting in its adoption of a very dangerous approach to international relations and one that is incompatible with the duties of a permanent member of the Security Council and is to be regarded as being in serious breach of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law.

The Government of the Republic of Iraq condemns in the strongest terms the hostile measures and actions that are being taken by the United States Administration against Iraq. The Government of Iraq reiterates its call for the condemnation of this hostile United States policy against Iraq. It calls upon the Council to take action to urge the United States Administration to desist from its policy of conspiracy and incitement against the security, independence and territorial integrity of Iraq, to counter these wilful and unlawful official actions on the part of the United States and to adopt measures to ensure respect for Iraq's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence and prevent the United States Administration from pursuing its unlawful policy against Iraq.

I should be grateful if you would bring this letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council, if you would raise it as a topic in the Council's consultations and if you would have it circulated as a Council document.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Iraq

Enclosure

[Original: English]

Wall Street Journal: Friday 17, July 1998

Clinton Seeking Support for Plan Against Saddam

Congress Is Asked to Give Broad New Authority For Covert Operations

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By David Rodgers

Washington-The Clinton administration is seeking broad new authority from Congress to plan and mount covert operations against Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

The secret initiative would go far beyond past efforts by the Central Intelligence Agency to encourage resistance inside Iraq. Top State Department and Pentagon officials have participated alongside the CIA in discussions with Congress, and what is anticipated is a combined overt-covert strategy to weaken and potentially oust the Iraqi leader.

This combined emphasis distinguishes the plan from past operations against Saddam Hussein, which have failed. Government officials familiar with the talks said the administration has sought to bring more assets to bear, perhaps including the potential use of U.S. military personnel. The scale of the initiative would require more than a year of staging, but appears timed to be fully launched before the end of President Clinton's term in office.

Administration officials declined to comment on the talks bow with Congress, but the administration already has sent to Congress a classified notice or "finding" seeking approval to tap secret contingency funds within the defense and intelligence budget.

Congress Finds Plan Vague

Within the Senate Intelligence Committee, the initial finding faces bipartisan resistance, and there is pressure in the House Appropriation Committee to tighten and narrow the authority granted to the president. Lawmakers complain the Clinton administration is still too vague in its approach.

Still, White House allies hope that the refinements can yet produce some consensus on the proposal. As now drafted, the House-passed intelligence budget for the next year includes contingency funds that could be tapped; the issue then could be part of talks when House-Senate negotiators meet to resolve their differences.

The administration already has funds available to pursue an open policy of support for Iraqi opposition groups. Earlier this year, Congress approved $10 million for this purpose, including the establishment of a new Radio-Free Iraq program. A recent State Department report to Congress outlines plans to establish an Iraqi center in suburban London and to support future conferences for the opposition in exile.

The policy debate now under way is driven by the continued frustration born of last winter's confrontation with Iraq, when the two nations almost came to blows in a dispute over United Nations weapons inspections. Certainly, top Republicans in Congress have been outspoken in

demanding that the administration take a more aggressive posture against Saddam Hussein. In the midst of the earlier crisis, House Speaker Newt Gingrich devoted most of a private meeting with Defense Secretary William Cohen to this topic. Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott of Mississippi later hosted his own meeting in April with retired Gen. Wayne Downing, former chief of U.S. Special Operations Command, to assess potential military options against Saddam Hussein.

Downing's Role

The Downing briefing, which hasn't previously been disclosed, drew a small set of Democratic as well as republican senators. Mr. Lott's office later tried unsuccessfully to set up a meeting among the general and Mr. Cohen and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. There was a shortlived interest-quickly killed by Democrats-in using taxpayer funds to hire a private military training company to work with the Iraqi resistance, much as retired U.S. military personnel have been used to train forces in Bosnia.

In a brief telephone interview yesterday, Gen. Downing confirmed he had briefed the senators on a range of options regarding Iraq, but he said he had no formal relationship with the resistance or any private business interest in the matter. "I discussed with them things that could be done," said the 58 year old retired officer, who has a long history of Service in Army Ranger and special-operations commands.

Within the administration, there was clear annoyance with what was seen as "freelancing" by Congress on military affairs. But the incident is telling as a sign of the level of frustration after the history of past anti-Saddam operations.

The Bush administration was the first to initiate a policy of U.S. covert operations, seeking the dictator's ouster in part by aiding Iraqi nationals opposed to his rule. The effort was continued under Mr. Clinton's watch. Yet, after nearly eight years and tens of millions of dollars, Saddam Hussein remains in power, and hundreds of Iraqis are dead or imprisoned after being allied with the U.S.

The most severe setback came two years ago, when Saddam brought armored units to Northern Iraq against Kurds who had worked with CIA operatives there. In the aftermath, the agency was further embarrassed when a veteran agent, Warren Marik, went public with his criticism of the operation.